THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • TUESDAY • JUNE 16, 2020 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 16 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

ICMR APPROVES NEW METHOD TO SPEED UP COVID-19 TESTING

The antigen-based testing kits will allow infected patients to be diagnosed much faster without a lab examination

RESULTS IN LESS THAN 30 MINUTES

The kit, called Standard Q Covid-19 Ag, costs about ₹500 and will show results within 30 minutes. Experts say the new method will significantly boost India's testing rate, which has been criticised as insufficient. The current method — RT-PCR — costs ₹2,500 per kit and samples need to be transported to and examined at a limited number of laboratories

ANTIGEN-BASED KITS ARE 'RELIABLE'

- Antigen-based kits test for the presence of molecules of the pathogen that triggers an immune response in an infected person
- The new kits have been recommended by the ICMR considering their very high specificity and relatively lower sensitivity levels, meaning they can produce results that are reliable

4,186

PER MILLION PEOPLE IS INDIA'S PRESENT COVID-19 TESTING RATE

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

STATE TWEAKS QUARANTINE NORMS AGAIN

3-day institutional isolation for TN, Delhi returnees; Government to cap prices for Covid treatment at private hospitals

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

FOLLOWING a spike in Covid-19 cases, especially of travellers from other states coming into Karnataka, the State Government has decided to tweak its quarantine norms. Henceforth, those arriving from Tamil Nadu and New Delhi will have to undergo three days of institutional quarantine followed by 11 days of home quarantine.

The seven-day institutional quarantine followed by seven days of home quarantine for those returning from Maharashtra and 14-day home quarantine for returnees from other states remains unchanged.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting headed by Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Monday. "There is a spike in Covid cases because of people returning from other states and not because of movement within the state. We have to regulate the movement of people from other states," Yediyurappa said.

Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar said that the government will cap prices at private hospitals and labs to avoid exploitation of Covid-19 patients. "The new, regulated prices will be uniform across the state, but may vary a little in Bengaluru. We will issue orders to all private and corporate hospitals with large number of beds to set up isolation wards and start treating Covid patients," Dr Sudhakar added.

Private hospitals have been asked to join hands as the number of Covid-positive cases is rising and the government facilities alone cannot handle the rush, he said.

The State Government has also decided to organise a 'Mask Day' on Thursday to create awareness on the importance of wearing masks and ensuring social distancing.

"We will take out a march from Ambedkar statue at Vidhana Soudha, maintaining social distancing. Celebrities too will be part of the rally. Similar events will be organised at district, taluk and hobli levels," he said.

Those not wearing masks in public places will be fined Rs 200, the minister said.

Yediyurappa is expected to brief Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Karnataka's handling of the Covid-19 scenario on Thursday evening.

The Chief Minister said, "There are no plans for another lockdown. In fact, we will request the Prime Minister for more relaxations." P4

Commuters wear masks on a BMTC bus at the Kempegowda Bus Station in Bengaluru on Monday. Social distancing norms are being followed inside buses | PARABARMATH G

Second plasma therapy patient dies in B'luru

A second Covid-19 patient passed away, despite being administered plasma therapy, at Bengaluru's Victoria Hospital on Monday. "The 58-year-old man was admitted with severe Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome. He was on high-flow nasal cannula and then on non-invasive ventilation. He received plasma on the 7th day of admission, was intubated but passed away the next day," said BMCRI Director Dr C R Jayanthi. P4

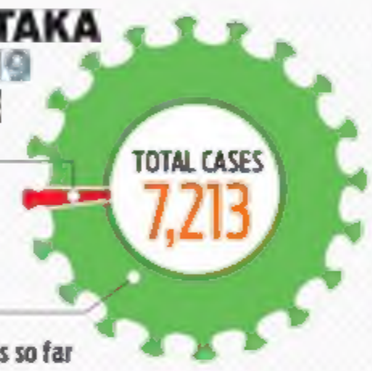
213

TEST POSITIVE ON MONDAY

KARNATAKA COVID-19 BATTLE

88 Total Deaths

4,135 Total Recoveries so far



FROM ACROSS THE STATE

- Karnataka reports two more deaths during the day
- Health Minister says cases to multiply by July-August
- Once a hotspot, Chikkaballapur currently has just two active cases undergoing treatment

Shah push for political unity to combat Covid

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

CONTINUING his exercise to fix the healthcare problem in the National Capital, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday urged all political parties to bury the hatchet and join hands to fight the coronavirus. Addressing an all-party meeting, he urged leaders to ensure that decisions taken by the Centre are implemented properly on the ground.

The meeting came a day after Shah announced a slew of measures to ramp up testing facilities and enhance the bed capacity for Covid-19 patients in Delhi. He briefed the parties about the decisions taken by the government after he held two separate meetings with Delhi Lt Governor Anil Baijal, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and the mayors and commissioners of Delhi's three municipal corporations to strengthen the strategy to fight the virus on Sunday.

Shah also paid a surprise visit to the Lok Nayak Jay Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital here to inspect how it was dealing with Covid-19 cases. He directed the Delhi Chief Secretary to install CCTV cameras in corona wards of all designated hospitals for proper monitoring.

Later in the day, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal emphasised that there will be no extension of lockdown. "Many people are speculating whether another lockdown in Delhi is being planned. There are no such plans," he reiterated in a tweet.

Delhi reported 2,224 new cases on Monday, taking its tally to 44,661. It has had 878 new recoveries and 56 deaths.

Stricter lockdown in Chennai, 3 other dists from June 19-30

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

TN Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Monday announced an intensified lockdown in Chennai and parts of Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu from June 19 to 30 to contain the spread of Covid-19. This means that the gradual easing of curbs, which had been rolled out when Unlock 1.0 was announced on June 1, will cease to exist for these areas for 12 days. On June 21 and 28, both Sundays, there will be a complete lockdown with permission only for milk and essential services that include hospitals and pharmacies. Besides ambulances and mortuary vans, only private vehicles carrying medical requirements will be allowed to ply.

The decision was taken as per the recommendations of health experts and the cabinet.

All rice card holders, members of welfare boards of unorganised workers, and members of other welfare boards will be given ₹1,000 as relief assistance. Palaniswami said in a statement, "Intensified lockdown will be enforced strictly in containment zones. Local bodies will ensure supply of essential commodities to houses. These areas will be disinfected twice a day."

Ambulances would continue and the supply of essential commodities and emergency medical assistance will be coordinated by special control rooms.

The CM reiterated that recovery rate in TN is high and fatality rate is at the lowest.

With the Tamil Nadu Government announcing an intensified lockdown on Monday, Chennaiites stock up on essential commodities | R SATISH BABU

MLA booked for violating norms at son's wedding

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Ballari

A case was registered against Congress MLA and former minister P T Parmeshwar Naik for conducting his son's wedding in a grand manner, violating Covid norms, on Monday. While the government order restricts the number of guests at a wedding at 50, there were over 1,000 people at this marriage.

Naik's younger son Avinash got married at Laxmipur Tanda in Harapanahalli taluk and the ceremony was attended by some of the top political leaders, including Health Minister B Sriramulu, former CM Siddaramaiah and former deputy chief minister G Parameshwara. There was criticism as Sriramulu, who is at the forefront of state's fight against Covid, was seen without a mask and not following social distancing norms.

A large number of police officials, who were part of the security for these leaders, too were at the wedding, but no action was taken till the event got over. Only later did the Ballari district administration serve a notice and instructed the Harapanahalli tahsildar to book a case. DC S S Nakul said he ordered the tahsildar to register an FIR against Parmeshwar Naik and his elder son Bharat Naik at Arasikere police station. "Whoever it may be, it is a clear violation of Covid-19 emergency law," he said.

A senior police officer confirmed the case has been filed.

State Health Minister B Sriramulu seen without a mask at the wedding

Council polls: BJP sends 12 names to high command

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE BJP core committee, which met on Monday to shortlist candidates for the Legislative Council polls, is said to have sent a list of a dozen names to the central leadership. Sources said CM BS Yediyurappa sought to field former ministers H Vishwanath, R Shankar and MTB Nagaraj, who quit other parties to join BJP, apart from Sunil Vallyapure. Others include Mahila Morcha state president Bharati Shetty, ex-legislators Sogadu Shivanna, Malikayya Guttedar, BJP state general secretaries Mahesh Tenginakai, Nirmal Kumar Surana, ex-MLC N Shankarappa and Dakshina Kannada's Pratap Simha Nayak. P3

EXPRESS READ

Wholesale prices plunge to 4.5-year low

New Delhi: Prices in the wholesale market fell to a 4.5-year low in May, recording a deflation of 3.21 per cent due to sharp decline in fuel and power items, even as food articles turned expensive. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) has hit its lowest level since November 2015, when deflation was 3.7 per cent. However, inflation in food articles in May stood at 1.13 per cent, as against 2.55 per cent in April.

HUNT ON FOR OLX BUYER OF SHIP MICROPROCESSOR

TOBY ANTONY @Kochi

OF the 20 computer components stolen from an under-construction Indigenous Aircraft Carrier at the Cochin Shipyard last year, the suspects managed to sell only one — a microprocessor. They traded it on the OLX platform and it is yet to be recovered. All other components have been seized from the two suspects, Sumit Kumar Singh of Bihar and Daya Ram of Rajasthan. They have been remanded in seven-day NIA custody. The NIA alleged that the suspects sold the microprocessor to a person in Kerala for ₹5,000, while staying in Kochi. "One hard disk and a RAM were recovered from Singh's residence in Bihar. Other goods, including three hard disks, five microprocessors and nine RAMs, were recovered from the house of his brother in Surat, Gujarat," said a source.

Pak frees Indian mission staffers after high drama

PUSHKAR BANAKAR @ New Delhi

PAKISTAN on Monday released two Indian High Commission staffers from detention, hours after India summoned their charge d'affaires in New Delhi and lodged a strong protest.

Earlier in the day, the two staffers posted in Islamabad were reported missing after leaving the mission's premises. The two drivers were from the Central Industrial Security Force and were on deputation. According to sources, the duo left the High Commission premises in the morning to pick up an embassy official, but did not reach their destination.

Sources pointed fingers at Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI. Local media quoted Pakistani officials as saying that the duo was arrested for their alleged involvement in a hit-and-run case, which left a person injured in Islamabad.

Earlier in the day, Pakistan's Charge d'affaires in New Delhi Syed Haider Shah was summoned by the Ministry of External Affairs and told that the two officials must be released immediately without interrogation or harassment. Their safety and security, it was underlined, was Islamabad's responsibility.

The two Indian officials went missing close on the heels of a video that surfaced showing Indian Charge d'affaires Gaurav Ahluwalia being chased by security personnel on bikes.

An expert panel will submit its report in ten days | FILE PHOTO

No more online classes till Std 5, period, says govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE State Government on Monday issued an order banning online classes for students from LKG to Class 5 with immediate effect. It also constituted an expert committee to formulate guidelines for online sessions for Classes 6 to 10.

The government had taken a decision last week to ban online classes up to Class 5. But in the absence of a Government Order, many schools had continued with online classes. Monday's order gives clear instructions to schools to stop online classes for these students and also directs them not to collect fees for these classes.

The expert committee, headed by education expert Dr M K Sridhar, will also draw up guidelines for conducting technology-based teaching — excluding online classes — for LKG to Class 5 students. It has to submit the report in 1tendays.

MINISTER'S HOPE

Resuming of spinning mills can close 'yarning gap'

K SHIVA KUMAR @Mysuru

SERICULTURE farmers want to come out of the cocoon they have been forced into due to the long lockdown. It is not just these farmers, even silk reelers are reeling under the impact of the pandemic. Reelers who produce silk yarn say the drastic fall in price has taken the sheen off the silk. But both the farmers and reelers are hoping for better days.

Now they don't have to look far for some good news. Sericulture Minister Narayana Gowda held out the hope on Monday that the sericulture farmers' issues would be addressed once the spinning mills in Banaras, Chennai and Hyderabad that produce silk saris start production.

He said that many spinning mills were closed due to shortage of staff and also due to the lockdown in the last couple of months. However, the situation will improve once the production starts and reelers supply raw materials to the handlooms, he said.

Several farmers have also stopped rearing silkworms due to drop in prices. P5

The prolonged lockdown has brought silk production units to a standstill | FILE PHOTO

"I have stopped rearing silkworms as the prices have crashed from Rs 600 to Rs 200 a kg

Raghupathy Gowda, Farmer involved in sericulture